

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.

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O 282135Z OCT 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 266135

EXDIS, KARACHI FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AEMR, ASEC, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: EMBASSY SECURITY AND EVACUATION PLANNING

REF: (A) BEIRUT 8038

1. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE STRAIN PLACED UPON MSG UNIT BY ITS CURRENT LIMITED STRENGTH, WE ARE RELUCTANT TO AUGMENT DETACHMENT BY FOUR ADDITIONAL WATCHSTANDERS AT THIS TIME. ASIDE FROM THE RISKS INVOLVED IN ADDED NUMBERS OF PERSONNEL MOVING BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE, PRESENT DETACHMENT SIZE, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN INCREASED BY ONE MAN IN RESPONSE TO EMBASSY'S REQUEST, WAS CAREFULLY WORKED OUT FOLLOWING THE REDUCTION OF MISSION STAFF IN JULY TO ACCORD WITH OVERALL CONCEPT OF A MINIMAL USG PRESENCE IN BEIRUT.

2. OUR CONCEPT WAS THAT A LEAN, HIGHLY-QUALIFIED STAFF,  
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CONTAINING PEOPLE WITH AREA EXPERIENCE AND LANGUAGE

QUALIFICATIONS, SHOULD REMAIN TO DEMONSTRATE CONTINUED  
USG CONCERN AND INTEREST, TO BE IN TOUCH WITH INFLUENTIAL  
INDIVIDUALS, TO REPORT AND ANALYZE DEVELOPMENTS, AND TO BE  
PREPARED--WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT--TO INFLUENCE THE

EVOLVING SITUATION. THIS PRESENCE IS PREDICATED ON THERE  
REMAINING IN BEIRUT THE SMALLEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF  
AMERICANS, ALL RESIDING IN THE CHANCERY, TO MINIMIZE  
EXPOSURE TO SECURITY RISKS IN BEIRUT AND DURING TRANSITS  
TO SYRIA, WHILE PERMITTING AT SHORT NOTICE A RAPID AND  
EFFICIENT EVACUATION (FYI: CONCEIVABLY BY NO MORE THAN  
ONE HELICOPTER, IF OTHER, PREFERRED MEANS PROVE INFEASIBLE.  
END FYI).

3. A STRENGTHENED MSG UNIT WOULD marginally IMPROVE  
EMBASSY'S ABILITY TO RESIST EXTERNAL ATTACK; HOWEVER, THIS  
AUGMENTATION WOULD NOT GUARANTEE SECURITY UNDER SUCH  
CIRCUMSTANCES AND OUR CONTINGENCY PLANNING HAS MOVED IN  
DIRECTION OF EMBASSY EVACUATION PRIOR TO FACING LAST  
EXTREMITY SITUATION OF ATTACK ON EMBASSY ITSELF. SMALLER  
NUMBERS MEAN AN EASIER-TO-ARRANGE EVACUATION. RESISTANCE  
TO ATTACK MUST ALSO BE CAREFULLY DEFINED. FACED WITH  
OVERWHELMING FORCE, EMBASSY MAY HAVE TO NEGOTIATE EVAC-  
UATION AND LEAVE THE CHANCERY, AFTER ESSENTIAL DESTRUCTION  
OF RECORDS AND EQUIPMENT, TO THOSE WHO WANT IT.

4. WE WILL, HOWEVER, BE FOLLOWING OVER NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS  
PROGRESS IN EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT RIYADH AGREEMENT AS WELL  
AS SECURITY SITUATION GENERALLY. WE DO NOT EXCLUDE,  
ASSUMING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE GENERAL STATE OF SECURITY  
PROVE FRUITFUL AND ACCESS TO AND FROM BEIRUT IS MORE  
DEPENDABLE, POSSIBILITY THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO AUGMENT  
MISSION STAFF, INCLUDING MSGS.

5. YOUR INCLINATION TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN LINES OF  
COMMUNICATION WITH YOUNES AND OTHER LEBANESE ELEMENTS IN  
WEST BEIRUT SECURITY PICTURE IS A SOUND ONE. TIME SPENT  
IN CULTIVATING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THIS KIND IS  
WELL SPENT. AT SAME TIME, WE ASSUME YOU WILL CONTINUE,  
PER PREVIOUS EXCHANGES ON THIS SUBJECT, TO PURSUE CON-  
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SULTATIONS WITH OTHER WESTERN MISSIONS IN BEIRUT AND TO KEEP  
US ADVISED OF YOUR CONTINUING PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL  
SITUATION AS IT RELATES TO ADVISABILITY OF EVACUATION.  
ALTHOUGH SHA'AR MAY BE SOLE GOL OFFICIAL WITH WHOM EMBASSY  
IS ABLE TO CONSULT DIRECTLY ON SECURITY MATTERS AT THIS  
TIME, WE HAVE NOT HISTORICALLY HAD GREAT CONFIDENCE IN  
HIS JUDGMENT AND CERTAINLY WOULD NOT BE INCLINED TO RELY  
PRIMARILY UPON HIS PERCEPTIONS IN FRAMING SECURITY POLICY.

6. WE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE FINE JOB YOU AND YOUR STAFF  
ARE DOING UNDER TREMENDOUSLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES AND  
ARE ANXIOUS TO PROVIDE ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE AND

SUPPORT. WE WILL WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS OR ALTERNATIVE  
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING MISSION SECURITY. KISSINGER

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